

# ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

May 19, 2013

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## **UAPB Professor to assist with ADE frameworks (Pine Bluff Commercial)**

Anthony Hobbs, assistant professor of Spanish in the department of English, Theatre and Mass Communication, will serve on the framework revision committee for the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) as a representative from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB). Hobbs' expertise as an instructor of Spanish and his knowledge of teacher education will be invaluable to the committee as ADE strives to ensure that their frameworks prepare K-12 students to continue to study foreign languages at the college level.

Hobbs holds two Bachelor of Arts degrees — Modern Foreign Languages and Social Science — from Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical & Normal College (AM&N now UAPB), a Master of Science degree in School Administration from Arkansas State University, and a doctoral degree in Education Administration, Supervision and School Management from the University of Sarasota in Florida. In addition, Hobbs has studied Spanish at the graduate level at Murry State University, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, the University of Costa Rica, the Fenix Language Institute in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and the University of American Studies in Saltillo, Mexico. He also has a Master's degree in Ecclesiastical Studies from Jackson Theological Seminary and is an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In addition to his service to UAPB, Hobbs has served Arkansas as an elementary, junior high and high school principal as well as serving as a superintendent of schools and currently serves as host of the television program, "The School without Walls", which is shown daily on UAPB-TV channel 24.

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## **Brookland junior high teacher honored for work (Associated Press)**

PARAGOULD, Ark. — After only four years at Brookland, eighth grade English teacher, and Paragould resident, Lauren Hendrix was named Junior High Teacher of the Year.

Chosen by the student council, Hendrix said she had tears in her eyes when Principal Keith McDaniel called her name at the annual academic awards assembly.

"We work really hard as teachers, and you never think that people notice," Hendrix said. "It's nice to feel recognized and know that they truly appreciate you."

Before working at Brookland, the Jonesboro High School graduate didn't plan on being a teacher. After graduating from Arkansas State University with a psychology degree, she actually worked in a correctional facility out of Osceola.

"I went to college on a vocal scholarship hoping to be a music teacher, but then I thought I couldn't be a music teacher," she said. "I changed my major and graduated with a degree in psychology. I followed my husband to Osceola and worked as a case manager at the correctional facility."

While working at the facility, Hendrix was able to fill her original plan of being a teacher while teaching inmates in a few classes.

"Some of them were trying to go back to work and couldn't even fill out their job applications," she said. "After working with them, I realized I loved teaching."

Hendrix decided to pursue her first passion, teaching, and moved to the Rivercrest School District while she attended ASU non-traditionally for two years.

"I was able to teach while I went through the program there," she said. "It was a great program for me to learn."

When a job opened up at Brookland Junior High, Hendrix applied and got the job teaching English to seventh graders, now moved up to eighth grade English.

"I love this age group, they're challenging and always keep me on my toes," she said. "My favorite part is building relationships with the students while making learning fun. I love it when a student says 'we have to quit?'"

According to Courtney Cochran, an eighth grade math teacher at Brookland Junior High, Hendrix's ability to build relationships with her students is what makes her stand out among her fellow teachers.

"She has a passion for teaching, you can tell," Cochran told the Paragould Daily Press (<http://bit.ly/12gEXsh>). "She cares about the students, not only in the classroom, but in their personal lives."

That passion shined this past year when Hendrix introduced a challenge-based learning project to her Pre-Ap English class centered around promoting kindness.

"I wanted them to look at what kindness was and why it's important here," she said. "They also began to look at ways that other schools promoted kindness in their communities."

While it began as a research project, it transformed into something much more when the students explored the topic of bullying. The students became so passionate about the idea of promoting kindness, that they looked at introducing an anti-bullying week within the junior high.

"They worked on it for a few months," she said. "I got it approved, and then the students made flyers and even set up speakers from the attorney general's office to come and talk to the student body."

According to Cochran, the week of events went very well within the school.

"Anytime you can talk to students about bullying, it's a great thing; especially at the junior high level," Cochran said. "Everyone became a lot more aware. It was a very special thing."

Aside from lesson plans and anti-bullying campaigns, Hendrix also stays busy with the senior high cheerleading squad and her national board certification.

"There was a change in the leadership of the team in March and I stepped up and said I would coach them," Hendrix said, who was the junior high cheer coach before her last child. "It's challenging to balance everything sometimes. But I try to focus on my time management."

Her application for her national board certification is due on May 31, and Hendrix said her goal is to achieve that honor. Although she must finish all of her materials by the end of the month, she also must take several tests and won't find out until several months later.

"It's an honor in itself to be nationally board certified," she said. "It shows that you aren't just certified in your state, but that you're qualified to teach nationally."

When she isn't trying to balance her class projects, certification or cheerleading, Hendrix tries to spend as much time with her family as possible; her husband, Craig, a firefighter in Paragould and two children, a 6-year-old son and 19-month-old daughter.

"School is my life really," she said. "It's not an 8 a.m.-3 p.m. job like everyone thinks, we take our work home. But, when I do have free time, I try to spend as much of it with my family as possible."

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## **Education notebook (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)**

LR high schools set graduation timeline

The Little Rock School District is hosting baccalaureate and graduation ceremonies for five campuses this week.

Baccalaureate services are scheduled today at the schools. The schools, times and speakers are:

Central - 6 p.m., State Rep. Darrin Williams, D-Little Rock, chief executive officer of Southern Bancorp Inc.

Hall - 5 p.m., Pulaski County Circuit Judge Joyce Warren of Little Rock.

J.A. Fair - 4 p.m., Capt. Warren Robinson, Little Rock Fire Department fire marshal.

McClellan - 3 p.m., Myron R. Jackson, chief executive officer of the Design Group of Little Rock.

Parkview - 4 p.m., Kenneth Matthew Martin, counselor at Drake University and 2008 Parkview graduate.

All graduation ceremonies will be held at Verizon Arena in North Little Rock. The schools, times and dates are:

McClellan, 6 p.m. Tuesday.

Parkview, 8:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Hall, 6 p.m. Wednesday.

J.A. Fair High, 8:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Central, 6 p.m. Thursday.

Association honors five administrators

Five Arkansas principals and assistant principals were recently honored as principals of the year by the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators.

Cindy Covington, principal at Allen Elementary School in the Siloam Springs School District, was named Elementary Principal of the Year. Suzy Ferguson, assistant principal at Alma Intermediate School, was named Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year.

Kathy Hopson, principal at Stuttgart's Meekins Middle School, won honors as the Middle School Principal of the Year. Steven Wise, assistant principal at Little Rock School District's Pulaski Heights Middle School, is the Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year.

Don Hoover, principal of Springdale's George Junior High School, was awarded the Secondary Principal of the Year award.

Oak Grove High use is focus of meeting

The Pulaski County Special School District will hold a community meeting at 6 p.m. Thursday at the Oak Grove Elementary School, 5703 Oak Grove Road in North Little Rock. The meeting's focus will be the possible use of the nearby vacant Oak Grove High School property.

At the meeting, district leaders will present information about an offer the school district has received for the vacant high school. In addition to district staff members, the potential buyer will be available to discuss the vision for the property.

Oak Grove High School was vacated when Maumelle High School opened in the 2011-12 school year.

More information is available by contacting Derek Scott, chief operations officer for the district, at 234-2052.

## Deaf School worker wins Fulbright trip

Stacey Tatera, technology coordinator for grades kindergarten through 12 at the Arkansas School for the Deaf, is the recipient of the Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching, enabling her in 2014 to travel throughout the United Kingdom as well as study at the University of London.

In her travels, she will visit schools for the deaf and share with leaders at those schools best practices in using mobile technology with students who are deaf.

Tatera is one of 17 teachers to receive this year's award, according to the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

The Fulbright program, introduced in 1946 by the late Sen. J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, has given approximately 318,000 students, scholars, teachers, artists and scientists the opportunity to study, teach, conduct research and otherwise contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

## Buffalo Island hires new superintendent

Gaylon Taylor is coming out of retirement to become the superintendent of the Buffalo Island Central School District on July 1, replacing a longtime administrator at the eastern Arkansas school district.

Taylor, 54, said he began his education career as a teacher and a basketball coach at Monette High School, which later became part of the Buffalo Island Central School District. Nine years later, he moved to the Valley View School District in Craighead County, where he was dean of students, junior high school and senior high school principal, and assistant superintendent before he retired in September 2012.

The Buffalo Island Central School Board gave Taylor a one-year contract, Taylor said. He will be paid \$87,000.

He replaces Superintendent George Edd Holland, who is leaving after 44 years with the district.

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## UAPB Child Development Center sparking early interest in science, math (Pine Bluff Commercial)

Children at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Child Development Center are learning early about science and math-related careers. The preschoolers recently participated in "That STEM Attitude." The multi-media presentation resulted from a partnership between the center and Davida Walls, a UAPB STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Academy intern.

The freshman biology major said she worked with the center to help "introduce and get the children intrigued about STEM. The teachers actually did the work and got them familiar. The youngsters eagerly showed what they had learned during the presentation in the Adair-Greenhouse Auditorium. As Tevin

Campbell's song "Tomorrow" filled the room, children dressed as pint-sized doctors, astronauts, scientists and more paraded in carrying signs.

Later, while a video featuring the "Rap-along Science Song" played, the children did hands-on science experiments. They also performed "Let's Count It," a rap song that highlighted the importance of math in everyday life.

"Our goal today is to start earlier so these children will have a head start in the sciences," said Dr. Mary Benjamin, vice chancellor for Academic Affairs. "We want to get their attention STEM professionals, who often make top salaries, are in great demand in the United States but there aren't enough workers to fill that demand. It's important to start building a STEM workforce for the U.S., Dr. Benjamin said. "It is better to acquaint them with careers that are science-related at an early age and in a non-threatening manner," she said.

STEM careers offer children bright futures, said Debra Jefferson, interim director of the UAPB Child Development Center. "The goal is to get families and teachers to think about encouraging children in math and science areas," she said. "The need is there and the opportunity is great. They may not end up in STEM careers but we want to encourage that."

Krandon Henry of the UAPB TRIO Student Support Services offered tips on how to spark children's interest in science and math by allowing them to explore their surroundings or visit attractions such as the Crater of Diamonds State Park. Denise Henry, an early childhood teacher at the Pine Bluff Arsenal, talked about how parents and teachers can relate STEM fields.

"It can be as easy as counting M & M's, talking about dirt or gardens or bugs," she said. "They're learning as they are having fun."

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### **What's the alternative to a well-prepared teacher? (Column by William McComas and Christian Goering, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)**

Most people agree that recruiting and creating the very best teachers for the students of Arkansas is a critical goal made more immediate by a significant teacher shortage in some subjects, particularly in mathematics and science.

This problem isn't new, nor is it limited to Arkansas. But the unfortunate response has been to propose programs that ultimately reduce the nature and degree of training of new teachers to get larger numbers of under-prepared teachers into classrooms as quickly as possible and to enable school districts to spend taxpayer dollars to hire these individuals.

This is a short-sighted solution and ultimately a serious threat to the future of our state. We must not lower the bar just because there is a teacher shortage; rather, we must develop and fund new high-quality plans for teacher preparation.

Proponents of alternative plans for teacher licensure suggest that principals will make good choices among those applying for teaching positions (or at least will make the best choices that they can).

These supporters also suggest that a well-meaning adult in the classroom is better than no adult in the classroom. The students of our state deserve better than a hope and a promise.

Though it wasn't necessarily its goal, Teach for America launched a movement toward alternative preparation programs in 1990 by placing highly successful college students in challenging and/or hard to fill teaching situations for two years of teaching. TFA participants sign on to work in some of America's toughest schools and receive about five weeks of preparation prior to beginning a stint as full-time paid teachers. Similar programs have spun off in North Carolina, Mississippi, and Arkansas.

The research on TFA has taught us that these smart individuals may make a difference in student achievement-but they don't stay long in the profession. The research doesn't show how damaging it is that such programs imply that anyone can be an effective teacher with little or no teacher preparation. Such programs also create a revolving door that moves people in and out of our schools, ultimately undermining the stability of the educational system.

TFA and other alternative teacher preparation programs generally turn out teachers less committed to a long term career in education. Few of us would want to be treated by a doctor, dentist, or nurse who'd sailed through a five-week preparation program with minimal clinical experience, so why should we trust our children and their future to these individuals?

In Arkansas, schools typically considered "lower performing" often serve students of lower socioeconomic status who tend to score lower on tests than do students from families with higher annual income. It is understandable that alternative teacher licensure programs target the placement of teachers in the most challenging situations. But there is an unintended consequence in doing so.

It is likely that these inexperienced and hastily prepared teachers will be hired in parts of the state where students could most benefit from superior educators. Thus the disparity in student achievement already seen across Arkansas will grow if, as we predict, the top districts in our state won't offer to hire the least prepared and most inexperienced teachers. If these alternatively licensed teachers are so good, why aren't the state's wealthiest schools lining up to hire them?

We must offer a strategic plan to adequately prepare teachers. All of us must work together to determine how many teachers are needed in what subject areas to serve in particular regions of Arkansas and plan accordingly. In Finland, which has become an internationally acclaimed model of school success, only the number of teachers actually needed are prepared to ensure that every new teacher has a job.

At the same time, teaching is held in high esteem because of the relative competitiveness in entering and rigorous training required by the profession.

We should move teacher preparation here toward such a model.

We firmly believe that all children deserve the very best educators, committed to and likely to stay in the teaching profession, well-suited for the challenges they will face and prepared rigorously and completely.

Cut-rate methods of teacher preparation, alternative or otherwise, will net our state the level of mediocrity they invite.

Here are a few suggestions for how Arkansas might meet the challenges of teacher education:

We should identify and nurture future teachers as early as possible. We urge Arkansas to consider following a research-based path like the North Carolina Teaching Fellow program that provides scholarships for high school seniors to attend traditional teacher preparation programs.

Let's provide scholarships for every teacher willing to make a longterm commitment to the students and future of Arkansas. In disciplines that need more teachers we should recruit individuals with appropriate undergraduate degrees and provide financial incentives so they can enter one of the many high-quality teacher preparation programs across the state and spend the time necessary to become master educators.

Finally, we call upon the state legislature to authorize tuition waivers at state universities to further encourage prospective teachers to gain the necessary preparation and engage in significant student-teaching experiences in key subject areas. This will permit them to join the teaching profession with pride, skill and a greater potential for a satisfying long-lasting career. A student-teaching program is particularly important since such experience is arguably the most important element of teacher preparation and the one most frequently minimized or eliminated in the majority of alternative certification schemes. Arkansans should be proud of the current requirement set for such practice found in traditional programs, but shamed by what passes for clinical practice in alternative programs- in some cases, there is no practice prior to taking the reins as a hired teacher. Other professionals don't exclusively learn on the job. Teachers shouldn't either.

We insist that the Arkansas State Department of Education maintain the highest of standards in teacher preparation. Currently it takes 1,500 hours of preparation before a barber is permitted to independently cut hair. Why would we allow teachers into classrooms with as few as 180 hours of preparation and little or no supervised practice?

Social commentator Malcolm Gladwell, author of *Outliers: The Story of Success*, says, "Practice isn't the thing you do once you're good. It's the thing you do that makes you good." The long path to expertise should begin before an individual stands before a classroom of students. We won't suggest that all traditional teacher-preparation programs produce universally excellent teachers, and we can't say that all alternatively prepared teachers are ineffective, but doing as little as possible just because there is a shortage is short-sighted.

We are not advocating the preservation of the status quo and are willing to re-evaluate the nature of all teacher preparation, especially in light of research-tested models. We must not allow foolish experiments with the lives and futures of the children of Arkansas. They and their parents have a right to expect that each and every teacher is the best available. They should not be forced to submit to the risk of alternative teacher preparation.



*William McComas is Parks Family Professor of Science Education and Christian Goering is an Associate Professor of English Education at the College of Education and Health Professions, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.*

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## **Vilonia spends special Saturday at graduation ceremony (Log Cabin Democrat, Conway)**

A sea of red, more than 200 red caps were tossed into the air Saturday morning concluding the graduation ceremonies of the Vilonia High School class of 2012-13.

Traditionally, the 208 graduates said goodbye to one chapter in their life. Both of the graduate speakers, Jordan Heykoop and Colton Johnson, ultimately, said the new graduates are prepared to begin the quest for the next milestone.

"We have been being prepared for this all of our lives," Heykoop said. Others, he said, have believed in us and invested in us including parents, grandparents, friends and educators. "We also have been blessed with teachers who really care about us."

In addition, he said, "It is important to continue to work to better ourselves." Our paths will be split and we "must choose the right path," he offered.

Johnson told his peers, "This is the moment we begin to carry ourselves." He encouraged them to make good decisions as they continue on in their different paths.

"The world is open and the opportunities are endless," he added.

The ceremony, held at the Farris Center, University of Central Arkansas in Conway, began at about 10 a.m. with the presentation of colors and the playing of the National Anthem by the Vilonia High School Band. The invocation was given by student Donny Nash.

Lasting about two hours, the bleachers on both sides of facility were packed for the event. Cameras flashed and the applause was loud as students filed in and on stage. The crowd was asked to refrain from making noises other than applauding.

The Vilonia Board of Education sat on stage along with several school administrators. VHS principal Andy Ashley and assistant principal Ronnie Simmons announced the graduates. Jerry Roberts, board president, presented all of the diplomas except one. School superintendent Frank Mitchell handed that one to his grandson Kaleb McBay, as well as shook his hand and gave him a hug.

The cheers intensified when student Angela Payne crossed the stage. A cancer victim, Payne has been dealing with the disease for about the past five years and has spent time off and on hospitalized. In an earlier program, it was announced that she has received the Eleanor Duncan Scholarship from Conway Regional. She plans to major in nursing at Arkansas Tech University with plans to become a hematology/oncology nurse.

Some students appeared to be emotional, such as Eileen Lee Cates. Tears in her eyes, she said she should have graduated last year but was in a head-on automobile collision in 2011 that left her with some injuries.

“This has been hard for me,” she said. “My friends graduated last year. But, I’m okay and glad to be doing it now.”

Cates plans to go to veterinarian school following graduation.

Nearing the end of the ceremony, Ashley asked the 40 honor graduates to stand. Many in the audience paid tribute with a standing ovation.

Students officiated over the rest of the ceremony. The turning of the rings was officiated by Melissa Sorsby and followed by the changing of the tassels by Caroline Armstrong. Christian Gunter gave the benediction.

In conclusion, Ashley said the class of 2013 has received more than \$3.5 million in scholarships.